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THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2016

Mayor suffers stroke

Maloney off duty for six weeks but expected to make full recovery
Page 3

Fix your cat

Port Colborne Feline Initiative launches new program with 'eye-catching' T-shirt
Page 6

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Hurricane Hazel at Roselawn



ALLAN BENNER/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Hazel McCallion spoke about her 36-year career building the City of Mississauga, entertaining an audience of nearly 200 people at Roselawn Centre in Port Colborne. The vibrant 95-year-old was promoting her memoirs, *Hurricane Hazel: A Life With Purpose*, during the Canadian Author's Series reading. Host Elizabeth Madronich hands McCallion a gift as her talk ended.

UPFRONT

Matt Santoro: From accountant to YouTube star

JOHN LAW

Postmedia Network

Matt Santoro recalls his days in St. Catharines, stuck with an accounting job he didn't like.

Punching the clock. Clinging to a pay cheque. When he was laid off in 2012, he had a decision to make: Look for another job he'd inevitably hate, or devote all his time to his YouTube side project in the hopes it paid off. Posting skits and 'infotainment' videos.

When he started in 2010, he was getting about 2,000 views a week. A huge number, he figured.

By the end of 2016, his YouTube page had more than 5.2 million subscribers and 623 million views.

"People need to understand that they don't need to, as I like to call it, be plugged in to the matrix," he says from his Toronto home, where he makes new videos every week which get a million views each within days.

"You go into a 9 to 5 every day, plugging in, putting your head down and working at a computer making money for someone else."

"I did it, I'm not preaching something I'm not familiar with."

"I put my time in, but at the end of the day I just wasn't happy."

"I'm blessed to say that after I got laid off — at the time I didn't know what that meant for me — now I realize that's what it took for me to really pursue my passion."

The Welland-born Santoro, 30, is now a full-



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Former Welland resident Matt Santoro brought his YouTube success story to Brock University earlier this week.

fledged YouTube star.

But it didn't happen quickly.

He struggled to get by while constantly uploading videos, to the chagrin of his conservative father. Doubts started to creep in.

"There are videos on my vlog channel — which is my second channel — where

I say 'I don't think this is going to work for me, I think I'm going to quit YouTube.' But at the end of the day I never did."

"Every time I was ready to give up I'd be like, 'What else are you going to do? You love doing this.'"

After about a year, YouTube began spotlighting his videos — things like Ten

Forbidden Places You're Not Allowed to Visit and The Six Stages of Hangovers — and placed his trailer before other videos.

Santoro went on tour with other content producers, promoting YouTube's brand. Soon enough, he was getting 25,000 new subscribers a day.

The sheer volume of view-

ers created a new career.

He earns money whenever his millions of subscribers watch the ads in front of his videos, and more if they click the links.

Santoro's success helped validate YouTube as a media powerhouse, able to create its own content and cultivate its own stars.

On Wednesday, March 2,

Santoro spoke at Brock University's David S. Howes Theatre on YouTube and the impact of social media on business.

"I got to be on the forefront of it," he says.

"What's funny is that when I first started, and I thought I was too late."

"Six years later I see people just starting, and I think good lord, it's mind-boggling to think how big YouTube has gotten."

"There's over 300 hours of video uploaded to YouTube every minute."

"When you upload a video, it's the equivalent of dropping a grain of sand on a beach."

Considering the landscape, Santoro can see why people try to be shocking or offensive to stand out.

But it won't help you long term, he cautions.

"It's not a sustainable business model," he says.

"We see that it works in the short term, and they get a lot of short-term attention, but that's not what's going to sustain you into the future."

Despite its vast content, YouTube is still a "tight-knit community," says Santoro. It's still in its infancy and is going through its "teen years" right now, with watchdogs that weed out inappropriate content.

"My advice to anyone getting into YouTube is, be a good person and make content that you'd be watching and proud of showing your kids. Do things that make the world smile."

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LOCAL NEWS

Maloney suffers 'mild stroke'

FRANK IEMAN
Postmedia Network

Port Colborne Mayor John Maloney will be off duty for more than a month while he recovers from a mild stroke.

Maloney's wife, Sherrie Maloney, said last week her husband suffered a mild stroke but is doing "very, very well" and has begun therapy.

She said he is expected to make a full recovery and should return to work in about six weeks.

Ward 3 Coun. Bea Kenny will be acting as deputy mayor while the 71-year-old Maloney is away.

Maloney missed last week's council meeting. Kenny, who chaired the meeting as deputy mayor, said at the time the mayor would be away

from work for health-related reasons, but no one gave any details.

Kenny could not be reached to comment last week.

Port Colborne chief administrative officer Scott Lucy said as deputy mayor, Kenny "has the full authority to act in the mayor's absence."

That includes signing bylaws and executing agreements on behalf of the city.

Lucy said that Kenny indicated she would be willing to represent the city at some of the mayor's more ceremonial duties such as attending events throughout the city.

"Generally we have a pretty good process in place where one of the ward councillors serves as deputy mayor for a six-month period," said Lucy.



FRANK IEMAN/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Port Colborne Mayor John Maloney is pictured in his office at city hall.

What's uncertain is whether council will decide to have Kenny, or any other member of council, sit in Maloney's

place at regional council while he's away.

"They'll probably decide that at the next meeting," Lucy

said.

Lucy said he first heard that Maloney was ill late on Friday, but didn't know at the time

the full extent of his condition.

Lucy said he's spoken to the mayor's son and that "all signs point to a full recovery."

"The word that I got from Mayor Maloney's family is that he's doing well and should be back in about six weeks or so."

Maloney was elected as mayor for his first term in October 2014. Previously he served as a federal MP in Welland.

"It's business as usual at city hall and we have a deputy mayor and she will be acting in his stead," said Nancy Giles, Maloney's executive assistant on Tuesday.

"We wish him a speedy recovery, and he'll be back at the helm shortly."



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I've been thinking about friendship

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Fraser, Seinfeld, Big Bang Theory.

All these sitcom shows have one common factor: they portray a desire that we all have — friends.

Think back over all the episodes of Friends, Cheers, Frasier, Seinfeld and the present, Big Bang Theory. Could these fictional presentations, that many live through nightly, be a vicarious experience (living through someone else's experiences) of what we really long for?

Look around the busy pubs and taverns; watch all the people in "Timmy's" and all other coffee shops. People gather to talk, be with and see others; to be part of a community — friends.

Sadly, others sit alone in these places full of laughter, noise, music and conversation. They may just want to be part of something with other people. They come, take it in and go out just as lonely as they enter. They are lonely in a crowd.

We need companionship. We need a few close friends. We need a few people who will take us just as we are; people with whom we can be ourselves.

Here is a great description, written by Mrs. Craik, of Friendship, given to my wife and I by long-time friends:

"Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person, having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words, but pour them all out just as they are, chaff and gossip together, knowing that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and then with the breath of kindness blow the rest away."

This short expression of real friendship reveals the deep seated desire to have some people in our lives who will let us be in their lives, with no strings attached, no false pretences, no hidden agendas and no fearful cover-up. Friends who do not seek to suck life out of us but rather, being with us and together with us, give life, encouragement, strength, cheering, passion for and renewing of a vision for life.

Friendship means not fearing they will turn away from us, nor we from them, if something stupid or crazy is said or even, something out of character. We don't have to guard our words, ideas or hurts. We can live in the security of each other's acceptance even when they see the real "me", knowing us "below the skin".

We don't have to prove anything, don't have to pretend but can accept and protect each other's weaknesses and celebrate each

other's strengths; no superior condescension and no destructive jealousy.

In turn, we can relax with each other knowing that both of us in turn are guarding our many weaknesses and celebrating our strengths.

I am finding a stronger bond with a few close friends and I miss them more when we are not together. Some are far away, in other countries. Every time we talk we pick up where we left off, as if there has been no time apart. Often, we agree that we would give anything to be able to get in our cars, meet at the coffee shop or over a meal to "gub" and catch up.

These friendships grow stronger as I get older, and I may add a few new friends in the middle of many acquaintances but these close friends are there forever.

To have a close friend, must be a close friend.

On bugs and Canada's climate change

If you want to know why we need to take climate change seriously, all you need to do is listen closely to Fiona Hunter.

Hunter, a medical entomologist at Brock University, is leading a team of researchers to determine if local mosquitoes can carry or transmit the Zika virus, a pathogen the World Health Organization has classified as a global threat.

During a Friday press conference in which Hunter talked about her research, she noted that Niagara is a "gateway to Canada" for bugs. Because of Niagara's geography and climate, it can be an ideal place for a new arrival to set up shop.

While the rest of the press conference returned to the details of her Zika study, the bit about Niagara being a gateway shouldn't be forgotten.

It's very likely a sign of things to come.

When outbreaks of insect-borne illness happened in warmer climates in the past, they were not usually something Canada had to fret over.

Our cold winters were more than just something to complain about. Canadian weather acted as a barrier to all manner of bugs. Even if they arrived, these insects wouldn't be able to get an ecological foothold. It was just too cold for them to survive.

Not anymore. Hunter said the warming of the climate allows all manner of critters, including biting insects that carry pathogens harmful to humans, to migrate north.

In the specific case of Zika, this might have already happened. Hunter said a

GRANT
LAFLECHE

known vector for Zika, the mosquito species *Aedes albopictus*, has already been found in Ontario. Part of her research is to find out if the species has established itself here.

In short, Zika is the problem de jour but the reality of climate change is the driver behind it for Canada.

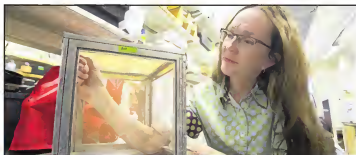
We still have problems coming to grips with climate change. A recently published University of Montreal study found while 79 per cent of Canadians accept that climate change is real, nearly 40 per cent don't think human activity has anything to do with it.

The science on the causes of climate change has been clear for a long time, so it's disheartening to see so many Canadians denying it.

"The again, maybe I shouldn't be shocked. It's not the first time Canadian scientific ignorance has been on display.

In 2007, an Angus Reid survey found that 42 per cent of Canadians believe humans and dinosaurs co-existed. That belief is a 65-million-year-old error that essentially means a breathtaking number of Canadians look upon the Flintstones as less of a cartoon and more of a documentary.

Not accepting scientific reality taints the way we approach handling the problem. If we



JULIE JOCAS/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Brock University scientist Dr. Fiona Hunter, one of Canada's key researchers on the Zika virus, feeds some mosquitoes with her own arm to show the media. Hunter answered questions from the media and gave a glimpse inside of her lab at Brock University where they are currently studying the virus.

deny that human technology is a significant player in climate change, we're going to be less likely to consider changing how we use that technology.

So we either about, saying things like "Well, yes, climate change might be a problem but we need to create jobs first, then we can worry about it." Which is like falling from a plane and being thirsty, and saying after you have a drink you'll consider pulling the ripcord.

As a result, we make very little progress on coping with climate change while disease-carrying insects, which are totally indifferent to human concerns, migrate into our environment.

The problem is compounded when you consider how few experts there are tracking how climate change impacts things like insect migration.

Brock University is lucky to have someone with Hunter's chops working there. But she says the community of medical entomologists is very small and shrinking.

She told me there just aren't that many people stepping into the field. She's concerned when her generation retires, there won't be enough new entomologists to replace them.

Given climate change's possible negative impacts on human health, we need sentries in the watchtowers. But we don't teach science nearly well enough, so culturally we don't respect it much nor place much emphasis on it. As a consequence, we don't value people like Hunter as much as we should.

If that doesn't change, we could end up digging a hole so deep there will be no climbing out of it.

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'Cats won't wear condoms'

MICHELLE ALLENBERG
Postmedia Network

When it comes to having safe sex, count cats out.

That's the message the Port Colborne Feline Initiative wants you to know.

The organization launched a new T-shirt design Friday at the Port Colborne fire hall. The shirt was created to bring awareness to spay and neuter importance and programs.

The front of the shirt reads

"Cats won't wear condoms, fix your cat."

Kristi Vogel of the Port Colborne Feline Initiative said the organization chose this slogan because it was provocative and eye-catching. She said it also gets the message across in a fun way.

For Vogel it is important to get cats fixed because the community is dealing with a large cat population.

There are many strays in the city. The feline initiative is try-

ing to help.

"I think it is the right thing to do on so many different levels. It helps the community to have less cats roaming around, less cats ending up at the shelter, and it is just better for their health," Vogel said.

The shirts are available at www.pcfelcats.org. They will also be available at fund-raising events throughout the year.

The funds from the sale

of shirts will go towards the organization's Big Fix program.

The East Village in Port Colborne is being offered free spay and neuter for cats, as well as free rabies vaccinations. Vogel said people can contact the feline initiative and enrol their cat by calling 905-964-4778. The cat can be a pet cat or a stray cat.

Vogel said the organization launched the shirts at the fire hall because of the great rela-

tionship it has with the Port Colborne's fire department.

"We felt that it is a good indicator of how the whole community is coming together to assist us with our spay/neuter programs. The fire hall, the fire chief and staff have been so supportive in so many different ways," Vogel said.

Fire Chief Tom Cartwright

said the organization is an agency that is making a difference in the city so he's happy to support it.

"From time to time we get involved with animals in distress, so it certainly fits in slightly with what we would run into," Cartwright said.

Allenberg@postmedia.com



MICHELLE ALLENBERG/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Representatives from the Port Colborne fire department, city council, and Port Colborne Feline Initiative display the organization's new T-shirt design.

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No new hockey team coming to Port Colborne

FRANKI IKEMAN
Postmedia Network

Port Colborne city council gave the go-go to hosting a professional hockey team in the city.

At the Dec. 14 meeting of council, city staff made councillors aware that the North Atlantic Professional Hockey League had toured Vale Health and Wellness Centre and expressed interest in locating a team in its new minor professional hockey league in the city.

The original report, which recommended that council not support the NAPHL proposal, was deferred to the first council meeting in February pending more information from the association.

On Monday, council received an updated report from the community and corporate services department regarding further discussions held with the league. The report said that a conference call was held to discuss some of the city's concerns — such as financial viability, alcohol licensing and sponsorship logistics — but that subsequent correspondence from the city to the league was not answered.

The report was not pulled for discussion at Monday's meeting, and the recommendation to not move forward with the league's plans for Port Colborne was carried.

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LOCAL NEWS



MICHELLE ALLENBERG/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Pelham doctor John Song talks about how different hip replacement techniques work at his office Zero Gravity Physiotherapy on Thursday in Welland.

Surgeon brings cutting edge surgery to Welland

MICHELLE ALLENBERG
Postmedia Network

If you're in need of cutting edge hip surgery you needn't go further than the Welland hospital.

Pelham doctor John Song introduced direct anterior approach hip replacement surgery to the Welland hospital about a year ago.

The direct anterior approach is new in popularity, but Song said it has been around for a long time.

"In Canada it is just making some inroads."

Song knows of only four other surgeons who perform this procedure regularly in Ontario. He said in Ontario the surgery is only available in London, Ottawa and Welland.

Song's patient Robert Shaver, 63, has been impressed with Song's abilities as a surgeon and introducing the procedure to Niagara.

"When he said to me they do this surgery in London, Ottawa, and now Welland I was impressed ... He's proactive for the benefit of the patients," Shaver said.

When the hospital needed a new surgical table Song asked to have one necessary for this surgery. The operating table has to have the suspension of a leg independently from the table. The table needs special attachments to make the surgery possible for all body types.

"You need some support from the hospital to provide that equipment, and that equipment is not cheap," Song said.

Song said the equipment is double what a standard operating table costs, at about \$130,000. He said the hospital

foundation helped to make the purchase possible.

"I saw this as an opportunity to have something different. It might not have been me, but it might have been another surgeon one day who would be able to do this operation and use the table to do this. We should be ready in case that happened," Song said.

The major difference between the conventional surgery and the direct anterior surgery is where the incision is made on the hip. For the direct anterior procedure the incision is made on the front of the hip. This provides the opportunity to go between muscles as opposed to cutting through. Song said the conventional way of making an incision on the side of the hip results in a bigger incision and the muscle having to be sewn back together.

Song said when people receive the conventional hip replacement surgery they may have a limp for some time after the procedure and some never overcome the limp.

The direct anterior approach allows the surgeon to go around the muscles meaning less impact on walking after surgery.

"I was up and moving around in the room. I rested, and by the third time I was in the hallway," Shaver said.

When people receive conventional surgery it could take anywhere from four to six weeks to heal. With the direct anterior approach Song said using a cane is optional and walking is much more comfortable within the first few days after surgery.

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JOHN LAW / POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Clockwise from top, Cindy Scotto, Jaden Scotto, Amy Qua, Arwen Scotto and Gail Hendry donned their Supergirl t-shirts to take part in Saturday's Bowl For Kids Sake. The event is a fundraiser for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Niagara Falls.

Heroes throw strikes for Big Brothers Big Sisters

JOHN LAW
Postmedia Network

The superheroes took to the bowling alley Saturday night.

With their T-shirts, capes, and even Minion costumes, dozens of teams gathered at Cataract Lanes for the second weekend of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Niagara Falls' Bowl For Kids Sake fundraiser.

After raising \$25,000 at the first event Feb. 26, executive director Jon Braithwaite was confident Saturday's followup would help Big Brothers Big Sisters of Niagara Falls reach \$50,000.

Last year's Bowl For Kids Sake raised \$40,000.

"This year we're specifically focusing on our waiting list," he said. "We've got just over 50 kids right now waiting for a Big Brother or Big Sister. Our goal is to get those kids off our waiting list and matched with a volunteer."

"It costs us just over \$1,000 to match a child for a year... so if your team raises a \$1,000 or more, you're taking a kid off our waiting list."

The organization has adopted the superhero theme for fundraisers across the province, including the Niagara Falls

branch family skate at the Gale Centre in January.

Money raised from Bowl For Kids Sake will help promote volunteer opportunities, orientation and match support.

Braithwaite said the waiting list is longer for boys. Some have been waiting 18 months for a Big Brother.

"It's a long time," he said. "It can be (discouraging). That's why it's so important for us, we want to see these kids matched."

Donning their Superwomen T-shirts, a Niagara Falls group calling themselves Family Falls were hitting the lanes for the 10th time in the event's 11-year history.

Team member Gail Hendry became a Big Sister three years ago to Amy Qua. On Saturday, they were both throwing strikes to help strike out the waiting list.

"It's just the whole idea of helping somebody out," said Hendry.

A Bowl For Kids Sake event was also happening in St. Catharines Saturday.

Upcoming events include a Bowl-O-Rama in Welland on both Wednesday and Saturday, and at Carroll's Bowling in Port Erie on March 12.

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DON FRASER/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Stefan Sjöstrand, president of IKEA Canada, is shown at last Thursday's opening of a new "pick-up and order point" site at Fairview Mall in St. Catharines.

IKEA opens new-format store at Fairview Mall

DON FRASER
Postmedia Network

They were among the first to enter IKEA's newest location at Fairview Mall.

Last Thursday, friends Marie Ricard and Jan Davis strolled with purpose into the "pick-up and order point"—a complimentary danish and coffee in hand.

Around them, the store's 30 employees offered them a cheer and rhythmic "clap, clap."

"Yay-y!" said the two, responding to the welcome from gold shirt and denim-wearing workers.

"We love IKEA, the products they offer," said Ricard, echoing her friend's sentiments. "We're addicted."

Both said the new location, where the Future Shop used to be, is a welcome commercial addition to the community.

City economic development manager Brian York hailed the new store as a "retail revival; this is the evolution of retail and we're extremely proud IKEA is testing it in our market."

The new "pick-up" format is part of a global pilot for markets where there are currently no stores.

At the St. Catharines location, about 100 large-scale items such as beds and tables are on display—other take-away items can be purchased there, such a throw-pillows, plates and Scandinavian-style home decor.

Customers who have shopped online or at another IKEA store will

also be able to pick up their products locally. The St. Catharines site features a scaled-down showroom and tablets to help shoppers buy online.

It is expected to mean cheaper delivery time and costs for customers, with orders to be delivered to the pick-up store for \$20. Once delivered, a notification e-mail is sent.

The location also features a "home-furnishing inspiration" area, with stations to help customers plan what they buy for their home. A large section of the 25,133-square-metre store is used as storage for shipped items.

IKEA currently has 12 stores across Canada as well as three other pick-up and order points, in Quebec City, London and Whitby.

IKEA Canada president Stefan Sjöstrand said the company is using the format to be more accessible to shoppers, with the Canadian pilot to include six locations.

"This is huge for us," said St. Catharines Mayor Walter Sendzik, who attended the store's Thursday ribbon cutting. "It's a global brand that has chosen to be in St. Catharines, with an innovative new retail product that is ahead of the curve."

"And I think based on 'location, location, location,' it's going to be very successful," Sendzik said. "We're proud they chose St. Catharines as a place to invest."

"They don't make these investments lightly."

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LOCAL NEWS



Riders at the Cycle for Strong Kids event at the Walker Family YMCA in St. Catharines Saturday.

YMCA cycles for strong kids

GRANT LAFECHE
Postmedia network

More than 200 local kids will be able to attend camp this year thanks to a legion of Niagara residents who rode stationary bicycles for a combined 500 hours Saturday.

Riders at all six Niagara YMCA branches participating in the third annual Cycle for Strong Kids event raised more than \$42,000, enough to help local children from lower income families attend camp.

Kristy McKittrick, external relations manager for Niagara YMCA, said the cycle event kicks off the annual, two-month-long Strong Kids fundraising campaign.

"We're hoping to raise \$435,000," said McKittrick.

The money is used to subsidize YMCA memberships for families who cannot afford to join, with a focus on giving local children a safe place to take part in healthy activities and programs, McKittrick said.

Last year, the Strong Kids campaign raised \$417,000, which supported more than 10,000 people to participate in YMCA programs.

The cycle event started 8:30 a.m. Saturday, with most participants riding for

hour-long blocks until 2 p.m., including St. Catharines Mayor Walter Sendzik and Niagara's regional chairman, Alan Caslin.

Caslin, who has ridden in each past event, said he has an affinity for the campaign because of his long association with the YMCA.

"I used to be on the board of directors of the YMCA and I was the past chair of the Strong Kids campaign," Caslin said.

He said the programs supported by Strong Kids improve the lives of local families.

"These programs are absolutely essential for some families to help them enroll their kids in programs that promote health and fitness," said Caslin.

While most riders stayed for their allotted sessions, a couple of brave participants chose to ride the entire day.

"We decided to do it because we believe in what the YMCA does," said Stephanie Laing, who stayed on her bike for the length of the event with her friend Matti Perchal.

A final fundraising total for the cycle event was not immediately available.

For more information on the Strong Kids campaign, or to donate, go to www.ymcaniagara.org.

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Komedy for Kidneys brings back the yuks



IF YOU GO

WHAT: Komedy for Kidneys
WHERE: Greg Frewin Theatre, 5781
 Ellen Ave., Niagara Falls
WHEN: March 3, 7 p.m.
TICKETS: \$25.55 tickets@
 gregfrewintheatre.com or 905-356-
 0777

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Glen Foster anchors this year's Komedy for Kidneys show March 3 at the Greg Frewin Theatre.

JOHN LAW Postmedia Network

There's only one thing to do when you're a comedian and all your peers are doing jokes about the U.S. election: Go the opposite way.

Which feels strange for Oakville's Glen Foster, who has cut up many a stage with his sharp political humour. But after more than three decades of scanning headlines and watching the news, his act has taken a detour in the past year.

"I'm of the opinion lately that people go to comedy clubs to kind of forget their problems, forget what's going on in the world," he says. "For a while I was pretty much all about what's going on in the world. Now I'm trying to be more abstract, maybe somewhat personal."

"It's hard to describe what that is, but it's not politically focussed. I guess I'm just trying to lighten it up."

So as the likes of Donald Trump

give comedians gold on a nightly basis, Foster is sitting this one out.

"There's so much of it," he explains. "It becomes very hard to top what's being done by *The Daily Show* and all these guys."

Nicknamed 'That Canadian Guy' — started by audiences who can't remember the names of comics they see on TV — Foster will again headline the annual Komedy for Kidneys fundraiser at the Greg Frewin Theatre in Niagara Falls. The show started in 2009 as a tribute to Niagara Falls comic Rodney Pentland, who died of complications from kidney disease that same year. Funds go towards dialysis care in Niagara.

For years, the event raised money for the new Niagara Health System Kidney Care Centre, which opened on Queen Street in Niagara Falls in 2013. A memorial plaque for Pentland hangs on one wall.

The event's co-founder, Mark

Matthews, gave Pentland his start when he owned a local Yuk Yuk's club in the early '90s. Matthews also suffers from kidney disease, receiving a kidney from his brother David in 2006.

For local comedy buffs, the show is like an all-star show, gathering headlines who do 15-minute sets each.

Egos are put aside, says Foster, but there's still a competitive spirit in the air. No one wants to be the weak link in the lineup.

"You better be on your game," he says. "You don't want to phone that one in."

This year's show features Jason Allen, Mark Caligiuro, Darren Frost, Johnny Gardhouse, Mini Holmes, Chris Quigley and Matthews as MC.

"When you're a headliner, you just don't work with other headliners. It only happens on these types of shows. It's great in a way because you see people you haven't seen in awhile, but the pressure's on."

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Region slammed over bridge project

MARYANNE FIRTH
Postmedia network

Missing communication paired with a lack of transparency and poor communication are among findings of a value-for-money audit conducted on the Bungeyne Bridge replacement project. The audit, completed by Deloitte Consulting, was presented to Niagara Region's audit committee last Wednesday, rais-

ing substantial concern among councillors about how the multi-million-dollar project was initially handled.

The audit includes all activities up to the contractor selection tender closing. Michael Ingram, of Deloitte, presented the firm's findings, as well as a series of recommendations for improvement. It was concluded the decision-

making process regarding the project was not sufficiently documented or communicated. In addition, the procurement process was not as transparent or competitive as it should have been.

There was missing supporting documentation regarding the project's Building Canada Fund application, the procurement process, documents related to project risk and awarding of pre-

liminary design work to Delcan Corp.

The procurement process for the contract administration and inspection services was deemed not open, transparent or competitive.

Ingram said he does not have issue with the chosen contractor, but rather the lack of rationale and documentation in the procurement file as to why Delcan

was chosen.

Communication, he said, does not indicate how the contracts went from an original request for prequalification of \$2 million to awarding an additional \$4 million in work to Delcan.

"To make a decision like that requires good documentation and requires that all involved have an understanding of why and how that decision was made," he said, adding there was "nothing in the file to support that."

Criteria for advancement, including a minimum score, was not included in the request for prequalification package.

The evaluations indicate there was a standard approach used to look at the different tenders, but not an articulation to the public and the bidders.

The Region, Ingram said, "took on a project that was more complex and more sizable than things that had been executed by the Region in the past and used project management techniques you would've for much smaller projects," Ingram said.

"If I was to give a comparative view, you hosted a dinner party and then opened a restaurant. They're quite different and require a different set of skills and techniques."

The project's detailed design contract saw a \$700,000 increase over what was initially estimated.

"You were putting a project estimate together at a point in time where you had limited design done and had concepts," Ingram said.

While the Region had a 10 per cent contingency in place to deal with issues like changes in soil conditions and revisions to the number and project approach, that number should ideally have been between 30 per cent and 50 per cent, he said.

The risk associated with having that low contingency compared to a standard number, as well as the analysis of what it would mean if there were overages should have been communicated to council, he said, but no documentation was found indicating it was.

"We didn't find appropriate level of risk analysis, risk identification, risk reporting anywhere in the process," Ingram said.

While he believes staff "had some understanding of the key technical issues, the size and complexity of this project pushed their limits," he said.

"I think their ability to understand all of the elements of good risk management and good project management were stretched a well."

There was not appropriate risk

reporting for the size and complexity of the project, he said.

Several councillors, as well as Regional Chair Alan Cassin, questioned whether there was any sign of fraudulent activity regarding the project.

Ingram said the audit did not reveal "an enormous gap" in what the Region paid for the work compared to what it would have likely cost under a different process.

"There was nothing that said to us a fraud had occurred," he said, "but what concerned us was what we did see. It points along the way where there was a lack of control."

"That lack of control certainly leads to the opportunity, but we did not see anything that concerned us in that regard."

Cassin asked whether the Region received value for its money from Delcan.

"The issue for me is not that you paid a substantial amount more of money than what we wasn't transparency and the decisions weren't communicated up the line sufficiently for people to have a complete understanding of what was going on at that time," Ingram said, adding he did believe value was received for the cost.

Ingram called it "appropriate" for the Region to create a standard project report touching on key elements of project performance, governance and accountability that is delivered to council on a regular basis. Risk management practices should be established and risk reporting and escalation protocols put in place to allow for regular updates to council on a project-by-project basis, he said.

In a memorandum, Niagara Region chief administrative officer Harry Schlangé said the audit reflects several areas "that were weak or deficient" when the project activities occurred between February 2009 and November 2013.

A number of those recommendations have been addressed to some degree since 2014, he said, including the implementation of cross-functional project teams, centralization of finance and purchasing functions, personnel changes, and enhancements to criteria for sole and single sourcing.

Structure has also increased regarding project management and procurement practices, Schlangé said.

"Work has been immediately initiated to re-evaluate and address all of the recommendations."

A management action plan is expected to be presented to council in the near future.

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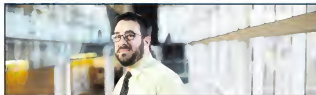
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LOCAL NEWS



JULIE JOSSAN/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Brock University professor and former *Jeopardy!* winner Eric Dolansky talks about rules that now ban Canadians from the TV game show.

Cancon ban disappoints Brock prof Jeopardy! winner

DON FRASER
Postmedia Network

What is a big disappointment? asks Eric Dolansky, who finds it a shame Canadians are now ineligible to compete on *Jeopardy!*

Dolansky, a Brock University business professor, was a two-time winner in 2006. He appeared in three episodes of the Los Angeles-taped show. After winning the first two, he took home US\$46,000.

"I really had a lot of fun," Dolansky said. "It was a once-in-a-lifetime chance and I ended up doing fairly well."

While rules say Dolansky, 40, can't return as a former contestant, it's a moot point given the U.S. television show now excludes Canadians from competing on the game show.

Last week, the show's Canadian host, Alex Trebek, confirmed a change in eligibility on the show's online registration.

Trebek said in an e-mail Canadians were prevented from coming on the line "since the show must now comply with new rules set down by the Canadian government."

Canada passed anti-spam legislation in 2014 and a new digital-privacy law the following year. However, it's unclear whether either would prevent a Canadian from using the show's online system.

Dolansky applied to be on the show in May 2005, then as a PhD student at Western University's Ivey Business School.

At the time, there was no online test, with the game show website indicating a testing site at Toronto's Royal York Hotel.

"There were about 80 of us in my session," said the Ottawa-born academic.

He showed his mettle on a 50-question written test and became one of the winners who passed that and a mock game of *Jeopardy!* That placed them into a contestant pool, with a chance of being called out over a period of

time.

Dolansky got the game-show summons in March 2006 inviting him to California, along with a few changes of clothing in case he won several games during the day's taping.

As it turned out he won two, but doesn't remember much.

"You are so focused and in the moment. It all goes by incredibly fast," said the Oakville resident, who has been a Brock professor since 2008. "You don't want to seem stupid, to come across badly. You want to win; that's why you showed up there."

There was also a degree of camaraderie between the contestants, he said: "We were all facing this unusual situation together."

"It was fun and quick, and I remember not being too stressed out about the scores ... you're trying to hit that buzzer and give the appropriate response."

As for the Canadian *Jeopardy!* firestorm, it's disappointing.

"Canadians have done well, despite the somewhat biased focus on American history and geography," Dolansky said. "But that's something we all know going in."

"It's disappointing other Canadians won't necessarily be able to get the same experience."

Dolansky is not the only Niagara connection to *Jeopardy!*

In July 2015 Bridget Ker — then a St. Catharines Museum employee — finished second as a contestant.

When contacted about the game show controversy, Ker, 34, was hopeful.

"I have to imagine it will be resolved," said the Hamilton resident, who now works for the Ontario Lung Association. "It sounds like they are doing this in response to the anti-spam laws in Canada."

"And it's more of an abundance of caution than anything."

— with files from Reuters

donfraser@postmedia.com

CONSULTATION FAMILIALE

Les fournisseurs de services de santé mentale du Niagara invitent les familles qui ont eu recours aux services de soins de santé mentale pour les enfants et les adolescents dans la région du Niagara à participer à une discussion de groupe afin de partager leurs expériences.

Les expériences vécues par les familles sont la clé pour développer un plan de santé mentale communautaire qui répondra aux besoins des personnes qui reçoivent ces services.

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- comprendre et améliorer le cheminement que les familles, les enfants et les adolescents doivent suivre pour avoir accès aux services de santé mentale
- contribuer à informer les planificateurs des soins de santé mentale communautaire et à continuer à travailler en partenariat avec les familles sur une base continue
- améliorer, ultimement, l'expérience vécue par les enfants, les adolescents et les familles qui reçoivent des services de soins de santé mentale

Votre participation à cette discussion aura un impact.

La consultation aura lieu mardi 8 mars 2016 entre 18h30-20h30

Centre de Santé Communautaire Welland

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Veillez contacter Madame Lise Corriveau (905) 734-1141 poste 2241 pour vous inscrire.

Jail time for 2014 Thanksgiving death

TONY RICCIUTO
Postmedia Network

A speeding Niagara Falls driver who killed a pedestrian on Niagara Street in St. Catharines on the 2014 Thanksgiving weekend is expected to receive a jail term when he returns to court in March for sentencing.

John Pullia, 34, appeared in Ontario Court of Justice in St. Catharines last week and pleaded guilty to a charge of dangerous driving causing death.

Many Martin, 61, an inside worker at Canada Post, was killed at about 6:30 p.m. on Oct. 11, 2014, while walking home from a trip to the grocery store at Grantham Plaza.

Martin was struck and killed by a speeding Dodge Ram pickup truck driven by Pullia just a few blocks from where Martin lived.

Assistant Crown attorney Tom Jacob said Pullia had picked up a female passenger and was travelling southbound on Niagara Street and accelerated his vehicle to a speed of 157 km/h in a 50-km/h zone. It was a Saturday night, the weather was clear and the road was dry.

The Crown said Pullia passed a vehicle on a blind bend in the road and lost control of his truck that continued onto the shoulder. Martin was struck by the truck, thrown 20 metres and hit a fence. She was pronounced dead at the scene.

Pullia's truck crossed a yard and hit a Toyota that was parked in a driveway. The Toyota, which was destroyed, was pushed into a van. Pullia and his passenger had to be removed from the pickup truck.

Pullia was given a breath test and his first reading was 110 milligrams of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood, and the second reading was 91. The legal limit is 80.

The Crown said it was not likely it could get a conviction on the drinking and driving charge.

The courtroom was filled to capacity on Tuesday, with some people having to stand. There were many supporters for the victim's family, along with friends and family of the accused.

Pullia kept his head down during most of Tuesday's proceedings while he sat at a table near the front of the courtroom with Toronto defence lawyer Frank Addario.

Martin left behind three daughters, Janice, Jessica and Jillian, who all submitted victim impact statements, along with other members of the family.

Many spectators had difficulty holding back their emotions while the statements were being read.

Janice said she remembers the knock on her door that night from a police officer who informed them there had been an accident and her

mother had not survived. She called her two sisters in the middle of the night and broke the news to them.

"I tried to stay calm, but now more than a year later I still can't think of her without crying," she said. The two granddaughters, she added, Ivy, 13, and Mia, 5, have been left angry, sad and confused about why their grandmother was taken from them.

Jessica Martin, the second daughter, said she was going on a trip and that was part of the last conversation she had with her mother.

After getting the news about her mother's death, she nearly passed out and quickly made arrangements to return home.

Jessica said she questions if things would have turned out differently if she had not gone on that trip and not asked her mother to walk over and feed their cats while they were away.

"Never in a million years would I have thought my mother would die from someone else's mistake," said Jessica, adding her mother was only three months away from retiring and their Thanksgiving celebration will never be the same.

"This was a tragic and senseless death," she said.

The youngest daughter, Jillian Martin, said "Steve and I were starting a family and she was going to teach me how to be a good mother."

She noted it's unfortunate her mother never got a chance to enjoy her retirement.

"She wasn't just my mother, she was my life," said Jillian, adding she had a clear set of plans for her life, but that has all changed since her mother's death.

The Crown said speed, bad driving and alcohol were all factors in this case. These types of cases, he added, have a tremendous impact on the victim, the community and the accused and nothing can be said that will ease the emotional impact.

Jacob suggested a jail sentence of 3½ years with a 10-year driving prohibition.

The defence read a letter of apology from its client who accepted full responsibility for his behaviour.

"There is no excuse for what I did. Words cannot describe what happened," Pullia said in his letter. "I have hurt people who did not need to be hurt. I have learned my lesson too late."

He also apologized to his family for putting them through this ordeal.

Addario said his client has operated a small business doing landscape and concrete work, but he will need to shut that down because he won't be allowed to drive and it will affect him operating certain types of machinery.

chinery.

"His conduct was out of character," said Addario, who described Pullia as a hard worker who has support from his mother, sister and friends.

The defence recommended a three-year jail sentence with a five-year driving prohibition.

"The cause of this accident was his dangerous driving, not his alcohol consumption," said

Addario.

Judge Joseph Nadej adjourned sentencing to March 24, saying he needed time to review some of the material that had been filed.

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IN BRIEF

Reminder of age friendly needs assessment

Port Colborne's age friendly needs assessment co-ordinator, Pearl Paul, remind city council and members of the community of the assessment underway.

The assessment aims to provide the city with measurable data on the age-friendliness of the city which will come together in a report at the end of June. Residents can participate in the survey by picking one up at Vale Health and Wellness Centre, Roselawn Centre, city hall or the library. The survey

is also available at www.surveymonkey.com/r/VZ786L8.

Med students start PAR project

A group of medical students from Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine's Niagara campus is undertaking

a participatory action research project in Port Colborne.

It's aimed at getting community engagement and input into health-related projects that could best benefit the community. The group is holding two town hall meetings at city hall on Thursday, March 3, at 7 p.m. and at 8

p.m. to discuss issues with residents.

The group will use the feedback to develop a project/initiative to address highlighted issues in Port Colborne.

City council Monday night expressed its excitement towards both the research and students involved in the project.

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LOCAL NEWS



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Niagara Parks Police, Fire Department, and Emergency Medical Services rescued two hikers Feb. 21 that were lost in the lower Niagara Gorge in Niagara Falls. With help from the Niagara Parks Police High Angle Team both hikers were lifted from the Gorge and returned back to street level. Neither hiker, both international students, suffered any injuries.

Two hikers rescued from gorge

TONY RICCIUTO
Postmedia Network

Two international students who were hiking and became lost in the lower Niagara Gorge had to be rescued Feb. 21.

Niagara Parks Police, Niagara Falls Fire Department and Niagara Emergency Medical Services responded to a 911 call for help at about 6:45 p.m.

Police said the male hikers, who are both 26 years of age, went hiking at about 3 p.m., entering the gorge from the Niagara Parkway in the vicinity of Whirlpool Road. While hiking they became lost due to darkness and attempted exiting the gorge.

Police were able to locate the hikers at about 7 p.m., just south of Hubbard's Point near River Road.

The fire department set up their aerial truck and with assistance from the Niagara Parks Police High Angle Team both students were lifted out of the gorge and returned back to street level.

The hikers did not suffer any injuries. NPP Sgt. Chris Gallagher reminds hikers they are welcome to enjoy the natural environment the NPC has to offer, but they are reminded to stay on marked trails, hike in daylight and with a friend, wear suitable shoes and clothing and bring a cellphone.

In addition, tell someone where you are going, bring water and energy bars, check weather conditions prior to hiking and know your physical limits.

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Woman rescued from canal

ALLAN BENNER
and MICHELLE ALLENBERG
Postmedia Network

Marcel Therrien heard her screaming for help.

He ran to the water's edge and saw the woman clinging to the narrow ledge of ice that had formed along the canal bank.

"She was bobbing in the water, holding onto the ice," the 55-year-old Welland resident said, last Monday afternoon.

Therrien tried to help the 21-year-old woman from the frigid water. He tried using a branch to give her something to climb out, but it didn't work.

"I couldn't bring her up... She was too weak to pull herself out," he said. "She couldn't hold on to anything."

And it was too slippery to get the woman out without falling to himself.

Therrien called 911 on his cellphone, and stayed with the woman until emergency workers arrived.

While speaking to the emergency dispatcher trying to explain the remote location on the west side of the Welland Canal south of Forks Road, he said he was talking to the woman as well — pleading with her to hold on and telling her that help was on the way.

"I just kept talking to her," he said. "I was trying to keep her spirit going."

But seeing her suffering while unable to help "was getting me upset," he said.

At one point, he said she seemed to be losing her strength and sank deeper into the canal until the water level reached her jawline.

"I was yelling at her, 'No!' he said, fearing she would let go

of the ice that was keeping her head above water.

Niagara Regional Police, Welland firefighters and Niagara Emergency Medical Service paramedics arrived shortly before 3 p.m., cutting through a locked barricade at the end of Kingsway in Dain City to access the gravel road that runs along the canal bank to reach the site where the woman had fallen into the water.

Police later identified the woman as Welland resident Lia Ciocci.

If emergency workers hadn't arrived when they did, Therrien said it's likely Ciocci wouldn't have been able to hold on for much longer.

He estimated that she had been in the water for more than an hour before he found her. And by the time emergency workers brought her to safety, he said she was likely in the water for about 90 minutes total.

"She would have been gone in another 10 minutes," he said.

At first he couldn't believe what he was hearing as he walked his dog Thea along the bank of the Welland Canal, Monday afternoon.

Therrien said he almost wasn't going to go for that walk along the canal when he did.

He said he had planned to make lunch before setting out for his walk, but his dog Thea had been cooped up inside all morning and couldn't wait.

Welland fire Chief Denys Prevost said Ciocci "is very lucky to be alive."

Prevost said a police officer, knowing time was of the essence, risked falling into the canal himself to save the woman's life.

Police said Const. Chris

Lindsey slid over the ice surface trying to secure a rescue rope around Ciocci. But as rescuers began to pull her to safety, the ice collapsed under Lindsey causing him to plunge into the water too.

"You're on the spot, you make that decision, right or wrong, you make that decision," Prevost said, referring to the police officer's decision to dare the ice to save Ciocci.

Lindsey remained in the freezing water, helping to push Ciocci while other rescuers pulled her to the canal bank. Lindsey was then retrieved from the water.

Both Ciocci and Lindsey were transported to the Welland hospital.

Ciocci was treated for hypothermia, while Lindsey was treated for cold water exposure.

Both are expected to fully recover from the ordeal.

If Therrien hadn't found her, Prevost said the woman "probably would have disappeared and nobody would have known what had happened to her."

"My understanding was she was trying to rescue her dog. One needs to understand that if a dog can't walk on the ice you certainly can't," he said.

"This lady is extraordinarily lucky, maybe not her dog, but she is. She could have very easily lost her life."

He said the best way to prevent something like this happening is to stay away from the ice and from shorelines.

"Stay away from the rivers, stay away from the ponds, stay away from the canal," Prevost said.

And if an animal falls through the ice, he advised people to call 911. "A dog can tread water for a long time," he said.



ALLAN BENNER/HELLAND TRIBUNE

Marcel Therrien and his dog Thea helped save the life of a woman who had fallen into the Welland Canal in Dain City.



Firefighters, Niagara Regional Police and Niagara EMS paramedics teamed up to rescue a 21-year-old Welland woman who fell into the frigid water of the Welland Canal after she tried to save her dog.

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